



Finding a Way

**Riverside's Training and Volunteering
Pathways: Final Evaluation Report**

September 2020



In the text

- Riverside Community Health Project is generally shortened to Riverside.
- The team refers to the volunteer and training team.
- Pathway is used to represent opportunities Riverside offers local people for learning, training and volunteering, so that they can move on in their lives.
- Closedown refers to the introduction by the UK government in March 2020 of restrictions to people's movement and social contact outside their homes, and closure of almost all schools, businesses, amenities and places of worship, in response to the coronavirus pandemic.
- Quotes are indented. Most are from people who have taken part in Riverside's learning, training and volunteering pathways. Quotes from professionals are identified by (Partner organisation) and quotes from the Riverside team by (Riverside).
- Footnotes are used to give references and explain/expand on parts of the text. Some footnotes are repeated at different points in the report.
- Relevant information is included from the 2017 Staying Afloat Evaluation Report, and the 2018 Evaluation Report of Riverside working with communities in transition and people who have migrated from central and eastern Europe.

Contact Christine Irklis for more information: christine@riversidechp.co.uk

Thank you to the many people who gave generously of their time.

Ann McNulty PhD

Contents

Section 1. Introduction

- Pathway through a pandemic, p.3
- Riverside: Background information, p.4
- The evaluation, p.6

Section 2. Riverside making a difference

- Activities and outputs, p.7
- A community development approach, p.11
- Building trust across communities, p.13
- Strengthening confidence, connections, and wellbeing, p.14
- Supporting people to learn, train, volunteer, and move into employment, p.16
- Impact: Pathways to change, p.21

Section 3. Mitigating disproportionate effects...

- Finding a way: Surviving and thriving, p.33

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Infographic showing training and volunteering outputs, p.34
- Appendix 2: Riverside ASDAN programme for adults, p.36

Section 1. Introduction

Pathway through a pandemic

Riverside has met all funding targets¹, against the backdrop of a global coronavirus pandemic² which began three-quarters of the way through the evaluation period.

Riverside responded promptly when the government introduced restrictions to movement and social contact from 23 March 2020. The team adapted provision to on-line contact and group sessions, and safely distanced check-in visits at the doors of people needing continuing support³. Riverside worked with other agencies to circulate information about staying safe, across communities, by the beginning of April. They supported people experiencing particular challenges because of socio-economic position⁴ and/or ethnicity⁵, and those facing hardship for the first time.

The risk of UK health inequalities widening was promptly identified⁶, with emerging evidence of people in poorest areas being twice as likely to die from COVID-19 as those in wealthiest areas, black people being three to four times as likely to die as white people, and men in low-skilled employment four times more likely to die than professionals⁷.

Riverside is proactively planning to mitigate social, economic and health consequences of the pandemic for local people living in poverty⁸. The team is well placed to deliver best possible outcomes with local people.

¹ Riverside provides detailed information relating to agreed targets via annual reporting to funders. National Lottery and European Social Fund have supported Riverside's training and volunteer work.

² The World Health Organisation announced COVID-19 as a pandemic on 11 March 2020.

³ Research by the Sutton Trust has found that many families in particular need 'dropped off the radar' of their support provider organisations (Chris Pascal, Tony Bertram, Carl Cullinane, Erica Holt-White, 2020, COVID-19 and Social Mobility Impact, Research Brief 4).

⁴ Daryl O'Connor and wide group of contributors, 2020, Research priorities for the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond: A call to action for psychological science, British Journal of Psychology, e-pub ahead of print.

⁵ Reviews of emerging evidence suggest that the greater risk for people in black and minority ethnic communities of dying with COVID-19 can be explained by interplay between socio-economic disadvantage, high prevalence of chronic disease, and the impact of long-standing inequalities linked to ethnicity (Independent SAGE, 2020, Report 6: Disparities in the impact of COVID-19 in Black and Minority Ethnic populations, Review of the evidence and recommendations for action).

⁶ Jo Bibby, Grace Everest and Isabel Abbs, May 2020, Will COVID-19 be a watershed moment for health inequalities?, Health Foundation; Richard Blundell, Monica Costa Dias, Robert Joyce and Xiaowei Xu, 2020, COVID-19 and inequalities, Institute for Fiscal Studies and Nuffield Foundation. Margaret Douglas, Srinivasa Vittal Katikireddi, Martin Taulbut, Martin McKee, Gerry McCartney, April 2020, Mitigating the wider health effects of covid-19 pandemic response, BMJ open access, <https://www.bmj.com/content/369/bmj.m1557>;

⁷ Margaret Whitehead, Ben Barr, David Taylor-Robinson, 2020, Covid-19: We are not "all in it together" - less privileged in society are suffering the brunt of the damage, May 22, BMJ, blogs.bmj.com.

⁸ Poverty is complex and affects different people differently through their lives (House of Lords Library Briefing on causes of poverty in the UK, 2016). John Veit-Wilson, a member of the original national poverty research team in 1964 and a founder member of the Child Poverty Action Group, suggests it is caused by lack of adequate resources to meet socially defined minimum standards (Adults Learning 2014, 6-9). The 2019 report of the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights' visit to the UK, highlights a striking disconnect between the government's representation of poverty and people's lived experience.

Riverside: Background information

Riverside works mainly with people in the Benwell⁹, Scotswood and Elswick areas of west Newcastle, some in families that have lived in the area for generations, and some who have moved there more recently¹⁰. For almost forty years Riverside has used a community development approach¹¹ to tackle issues that relate to health in the broadest sense. Local people have been involved in a voluntary capacity in Riverside's service development and provision, and some in managing the organisation as trustees.

The way in which Riverside Community Health Project began and has continued to develop is an important factor in its success in supporting people living in an economically disadvantaged urban area. Communities are at the heart of the work, and issues affecting local people are central to programme planning. The team is based in Carnegie Building, which opened as Benwell Library in 1909 with a lamp above the entrance representing the light of knowledge¹². The local authority closed the library in 2010, and Riverside took over management of the building and developed it into an accessible community space for people of all ages¹³. When Riverside provided free space for art therapy with children affected by domestic violence, one of them described it as their "sunshine place".

In the context of the Court Report¹⁴ (1976) and Black Report¹⁵ (1980), Riverside Child Health Project was set up with the aims of: improving the health of children along west Newcastle's riverside, which had been identified as one of the poorest areas in the UK;

⁹ Between 1972 and 1978 Benwell was one of twelve Community Development Projects (CDPs) that were part of a government anti-poverty programme (Benwell Community Project, 1981, West Newcastle in Growth and Decline, Newcastle upon Tyne: Benwell CDP). The project team worked with local people to research the causes of poverty in the area and potentially bring about change. Benwell and other CDPs across the country concluded that poverty was caused by factors outside local people's control, including industrial decline and insensitive housing policies (<https://stjameschurchnewcastle.wordpress.com/cdp-booklets/>).

¹⁰ Knowledge Inclusion Project Briefing Paper, 2008, Migration into the west end of Newcastle. The Knowledge Inclusion Project (KIP) was part of West End Community Development Consortium, funded through Neighbourhood Renewal, a form of local government finance launched in 2000 and given to the most disadvantaged areas. The consortium supported community participation in west end regeneration activities. KIP produced a series of briefing papers in response to local people and groups raising issues. Copies were circulated through a range of organisations, including West End Health Resource Centre, Scotswood Support Centre, Search, Angelou Centre, and Riverside Community Health Project.

¹¹ David Evans, 2003, New directions in tackling inequalities in health, in Judy Orme, Jane Powell, Pat Taylor, Tony Harrison, Melanie Grey (eds), Public Health for the 21st Century: New Perspectives on policy, participation and practice, Maidenhead: Open University Press, pp:163-176. This chapter highlights the importance of community development and multidisciplinary partnership in tackling inequality.

¹² St. James' Heritage and Environment Group, 2015, Never felt so good: Benwell and Scotswood in felt, <http://stjameschurchnewcastle.wordpress.com>.

¹³ Green Judith, 2008, 100 years of your life: Benwell Library, Knowledge Inclusion Project, West End Community Development Consortium.

¹⁴ The paediatrician Donald Court published the Committee on Child Health Services report, Fit for the Future, proposing radical change in children's health care, including a move to care in the community.

¹⁵ In 1980 the Department of Health and Social Security published the Report of the Working Group on Inequalities in Health. The document highlighted unequal distribution of ill-health and death among the UK population, and concluded that these inequalities were mainly attributable to other inequalities influencing health, including income and housing. The report findings and recommendations were not used by the Secretary of State for Social Services (J A Muir Gray, 1982, Abstract, Inequalities in health, The Black Report: A summary and comment, International Journal of Health Services 12(3), pp.349-80).

changing power relations between different NHS workers; and linking the knowledge of professionals and local parents.

The team was initially based in a local school, then moved into a building next to Benwell Library. It brought health improvement and medical practitioners¹⁶ together with a community development worker funded through the Inner City Partnership programme and managed by Save the Children. Local parents, mainly women, developed the confidence to become involved in making child health services more appropriate and accessible.

The community development strand of the project supported the local women to take action to set up Riverside Centre in the basement of Benwell Library.

It was an initiative experimenting with a different and more equal way of working between health professionals and local people. This included developing better relationships, and trusting parents' expertise and knowledge as well as that of the professionals. It included a small community development component which was managed by Save the Children and funded through Inner City Partnership. The community development worker did a lot of listening, and at some point she identified a strong interest in the idea of having a place where women could call in after taking their children to school, and meet, talk, maybe have activities. She talked to me as I was then Priority Area Team leader for Benwell and I met the main women who were keen on this idea. They looked around for suitable premises and discovered the basement of Benwell Library, which was used then for storage of old newspapers but was ideal as it had windows on one side and heating in the form of the library heating pipes running across the ceiling. I got the local councillors on board and we funded the refurbishment of the space. The new space was called the Riverside Centre and was opened early in 1985. The Centre was locally managed, although the community development worker was still managed by Save the Children and based with the Child Health Project team. The library service was very supportive and let Riverside use the basement at a peppercorn rent. The library service remained involved throughout Riverside's tenure of the basement, making it possible for women to have access to other spaces in the building. One of the last things I was able to do before leaving the council was to initiate a major funding bid to City Challenge to develop the library building as a family learning centre, and this paid for the lift, for example. The family learning centre was a genuine partnership between the library service, Riverside, and West Newcastle Picture History Collection¹⁷.

In 1991 the local people managing Riverside Centre developed a plan for an independent Riverside Community Health Project, initially funded from the social services grant aid budget and then through City Challenge¹⁸.

¹⁶ The medical practitioners were part of the Community Paediatric Service. GPs in training were also involved, on placement with the Child Health Project.

¹⁷ Quote from email communication with Judith Green, co-author of an evaluation of Riverside (Judith Green and David Price, 1996, *Health, Poverty and Community: An evaluation of the work of the Riverside Community Health Project*, Social Welfare Research Unit, University of Northumbria).

¹⁸ UNISON and Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service, 2012, *The Heart of the City: The Voluntary and Community Sector in Newcastle*, Newcastle upon Tyne: UNISON,

The evaluation

The evaluation report presents information about the value and policy relevance of Riverside's wide range of pathways in supporting people to build self-confidence, learn, train, volunteer and move to employment.

The Riverside team planned a participatory approach¹⁹ to the evaluation. They have used it as an opportunity to look at the way they do things and make appropriate changes.

Target outcomes²⁰ for people across the age range:

- improved social connection for people identified as experiencing isolation
- improved health and wellbeing
- improved sense of self worth.

Information has been produced through:

- interviews conducted face to face, by telephone, and online²¹
- evaluator observation and participation in team and group sessions, and at events
- analysis of data relating to people's progress
- feedback about the quality of training
- review of the process and outcomes of volunteering placements.

Section 1 of the final report introduces:

- the current context of the pandemic
- background information about Riverside Community Health Project
- the evaluation process.

Section 2 presents and discusses:

- a summary of Riverside's learning, training and volunteering pathways' outputs²², and relevance to policy priorities
- the community development approach that underpins Riverside's work with diverse groups of people
- the ways in which Riverside builds on people's strengths and supports them to learn, train, volunteer and move to employment; reduces social isolation; and improves self-worth, health and wellbeing

Section 3 discusses next steps in sustaining and developing training and volunteering pathways for local people in the context of the economic and social effects of a continuing global pandemic and Britain's exit from the European Union at the end of December 2020.

¹⁹ A participatory approach involves people whose action is being looked at, in producing and using knowledge about it (International Collaboration for Participatory Health Research, 2013, Position Paper 1: What is Participatory Health Research?, Version: May 2013, Berlin: ICPHR).

²⁰ These targets relate to National Lottery Reaching Communities funding, September 2018 to September 2020. Since May 2019 the European Social Fund has supported Riverside's training and volunteer work. Riverside reports annually to funders with detailed information about performance against targets.

²¹ A limitation of the evaluation is the gap in interviews with men who take part in a range of activities in Carnegie Building. Information about outcomes for men is captured in Riverside's data.

²² In a seminar about university and third sectors working together to influence policy and practice, Professor Mark Shucksmith emphasised the importance of voluntary and community sector organisations being able to show how their work makes a difference (Schucksmith 2015).

Section 2. Riverside making a difference

For over thirty years Riverside has supported people to build self-confidence and try new learning, training, volunteering and employment opportunities. The difference Riverside's work makes for local people is discussed in this section.

There is evidence of impact in relation to target outcomes:

- improved social connection for people identified as experiencing isolation
- improved health and wellbeing
- improved sense of self worth.

Riverside has successfully recruited people identified as experiencing isolation. People's feedback strongly suggests improved social connection, health, wellbeing and sense of self worth.

Riverside adds significant value to funding directed specifically at training and volunteering pathways. The following section presents Riverside's activities and outputs, illustrating how the training and volunteering pathways are an integral part of broad-based provision in a community based organisation where lots of people come in and out of the building to take part in a range of things. The added value of this is illustrated in the example of a woman who had migrated to Newcastle from central Europe and became a volunteer childcare worker in Riverside. She encouraged others in her community to take advantage of opportunities on offer for children in Carnegie Building²³.

Activities and outputs

Training and volunteering outputs, 1 September 2018 to 31 August 2020:

- the volunteer/training team was consolidated through recruitment and internal promotion
- a new volunteering platform was developed, and launched on Riverside's website
- 680 people took part in at least one training course/session, and 90 of the 680 took part in more than one
- 589 completed at least one accredited course and 91 at least one certificated session
- women were in the majority as training course participants: 548 women and 132 men
- 151 people were in the age bracket of seventeen to twenty-five, 290 were aged twenty-six to thirty-nine, 151 were between forty and fifty-nine, and 37 were over sixty²⁴
- 260 training course participants identified as White British, 172 as from central/eastern Europe, 203 as from black and other minority ethnic community background
- the majority of training course participants live in inner west Newcastle wards

²³ Riverside offers a range of support for children, including development through active play (Movement and Play) and sessions exploring different materials (Messy Play); after school play for 5 to 8 year olds; open play sessions (Time to Toddle and Wiggles and Rhymes); breakfast club; interactive singing sessions.

²⁴ Not everyone shared information about age, ethnicity and postcode.

- the team set up the ASDAN qualification system
- an ASDAN programme partnership was agreed with Canning Street Primary School
- 8 young people completed a pilot adapted version of the ASDAN programme
- 4 adult ASDAN courses were advertised via local communities/partner organisations. 26 adults registered and 11 completed the course
- 87 people were actively volunteering, from a pool of 131 registered as volunteers with Riverside between 1 September 2018 and 31 August 2020
- the 87 active volunteers worked 12,806 hours, equivalent to 8 full-time posts and £190,041.04 worth of paid time at an hourly rate of £14.84
- 78 of the active volunteers were women and 9 were men, with 2 aged seventeen to twenty-five, 47 in the twenty-six to thirty-nine age bracket, 28 between forty and fifty-nine, and 10 over sixty
- 43 active volunteers identified as White British, 18 as from central/eastern Europe, and 24 as from black and other minority ethnic community background
- the majority of active volunteers live in inner west Newcastle wards
- eighty people took part in a June 2019 event celebrating volunteers and partnerships²⁵
- Riverside explored internal roles that people could do in a voluntary capacity, to expand volunteering opportunities from January 2020
- people asked for support with writing CVs and the team responded. They arranged for JET²⁶ to conduct practise interviews.
- 20 people moved into paid employment²⁷.
- Riverside has thought strategically about an increase in the number of people registering for courses, many of which are oversubscribed. Riverside continues to liaise with other organisations to try to ensure people have access to the course they need. The increase may reflect Riverside's success in engaging people who have been least likely to take part in learning. People from a wide range of ethnicities have taken part in courses.

²⁵ The event, during national Volunteers' Week, celebrated partnerships with: Hawthorn Primary School; West Newcastle Academy; Newcastle West End Food Bank; Success 4 All Learning Hub; Search; Canning Street Primary School; St Vincent de Paul; Millin Charity; Scotswood Community Garden.

²⁶ JET is a registered advice and guidance charity in Newcastle upon Tyne. It helps people from black and minority ethnic communities, including refugees and people seeking asylum, to find work.

²⁷ Public Health England, 2017, Movement into Employment: Return on Investment Tool. The report's review and analysis shows significant mental health benefits and consequent financial savings from people moving into sustainable employment, as well as direct financial benefits. In the continuing pandemic situation it is difficult to predict which areas of employment might be sustainable.

During the period of evaluating training and volunteering pathways, Riverside has:

- developed its website to highlight the wider strategic work behind its service provision, responding to issues raised by local people
- involved local people in the development of its Facebook page
- organised 2019 and 2020 International Women's Day events
- postponed the Chief Executive's plan to pilot an introductory community development session for new members of the Riverside team, open to partner organisations, due to the pandemic
- supported approximately 1000 people to apply to the European Union settlement scheme. This provision has continued during the pandemic, face to face in Carnegie Building with appropriate safety measures. Riverside has successfully applied for further funding for partnership work with Newcastle Law Centre and the Children's Society
- continued with building refurbishment for long-term sustainability. This began in July 2020 and should be finished in January 2021. Women who have been part of an on-line Keep Paddling group, set up at the start of the pandemic, worked as volunteers to plan a launch event, and produced publicity materials
- explored further funding opportunities for capital expenditure for top storey development in Carnegie Building. This will produce greater efficiency of use of space, upgrade the heating system, and replace windows
- in the context of the Black Lives Matter²⁸ movement, posted two short videos recorded by a retired sessional worker, discussing Britain's history of involvement in slavery and the effects of racism
- recruited two new sessional workers as translators (Romanian and Czech)
- continued effective partnership work with Patchwork Project²⁹, for example the Riverside team signposted young women with children to Riverside, some of whom completed Early Help³⁰ plans with workers
- continued its commitment to broad-based collaboration, eg membership of the multi-agency Social Justice Advisory Group facilitated by Newcastle University. The group aims to strengthen links between the university and the third sector, for joint action around social justice themes.

²⁸ Black Lives Matter is a movement responding to all racially motivated violence against black people.

²⁹ Patchwork Project works with young people aged 5 to 25 who live in the west end of Newcastle and the surrounding area, including those at risk of involvement in, or already in, the Criminal Justice System.

³⁰ Early Help is a way of describing the extra support a family can receive if they need it. Early Help brings together workers to try to make things improve for everyone. Early Help could include support with parenting, employment, anti-social behaviour, school attendance and emotional wellbeing ([newcastle.gov.uk](https://www.newcastle.gov.uk)).

Riverside's response to the global pandemic:

- to keep local people and the team safe, the Finance and Operations Officer promptly produced a pandemic risk assessment policy, adapting a Children North East document
- eight of the team were furloughed on full pay and seven worked through closedown, one of whom was on call for emergency situations, accommodating child care needs
- remote working was set up, with daily Zoom staff meetings
- the team worked alongside Newcastle Family Hub and Action for Children to make sure the most vulnerable families continued to receive support. This included a strategy for food deliveries to families most in need
- two workers followed local authority food parcel deliveries, dropping off fresh fruit and vegetable bags as a way of seeing families in need of continuing support once a week, speaking with them on the phone at a safe distance from their front doors
- the team provided emergency supplies to people in greatest need, supported by uplift in National Lottery funding
- the team adapted training sessions for online delivery
- Riverside used funding uplift to make sure everyone had computer access, buying and lending out dongles³¹ and lightweight computer tablets
- at the beginning of April 2020, together with Haref³², Northumbria Police and Newcastle Council, Riverside produced online information about how and where people could get support. This included video recorded information about staying safe during a pandemic, in a range of first languages
- Riverside successfully applied for funding to set up an online Keep Paddling support group for women, using the Staying Afloat resilience programme model. A sessional worker has facilitated weekly sessions with women from different communities. Activities have included cooking as an online group; making face masks with sewing machines lent out by Riverside; making cards for different occasions, with materials delivered by the Riverside team. In the course of group sessions to date the facilitator has picked up a domestic violence issue, and the team has been in touch with the woman, talking with her carefully in the unusual and complicated situation of her being confined to the house with her partner. Riverside continues to monitor the situation, liaising with specialist agencies
- a '5 a day for health and wellbeing' was launched as a daily interactive programme

³¹ A dongle is a small piece of computer hardware that adds functionality to other digital devices.

³² Newcastle Health and Race Equality Forum developed from the Race Equality ASA. Now referred to as Haref, it continues to support people across black and minority ethnic communities to be involved in discussions about the commissioning and development of services. It is a network aiming to address health inequalities experienced by people in black and minority ethnic communities, and a mechanism for celebrating things that work well, identifying gaps in service provision, and coordinating action to address gaps. Riverside has always been an active participant in the Haref network.

- the team contacted everyone who had taken part in training and volunteering pathways over the previous year, to ask them how they were doing, if they needed support of any kind, and what their next steps might be.
- one of the bilingual workers recorded bedtime stories for children, using puppetry
- Riverside circulated activity guides for people of all ages, produced by Newcastle Public Health Team and Active Newcastle, in English, Urdu, Bengali, Arabic, Czech, Slovak and Mandarin
- Riverside set up a range of posts on its Facebook page including: ideas for more fruit and vegetables in meals; how to keep children safe online; information about accessing primary care support; physical distancing and why it is important during a pandemic
- Riverside continued planning for service provision in the medium term. Online provision will continue until January 2020, apart from EUSS support, unless circumstances change significantly. Sessions such as baby massage will be live recorded, available via catch-up for those in employment and/or with other daytime responsibilities.
- Riverside has supported people who immediately lost jobs because of the pandemic, eg car-washing. Pay in hand arrangements have left some people with no NI contributions to qualify for government support. They have been, and remain, at risk of unmanageable levels of debt.

A community development approach

Riverside describes itself as using a community development approach to tackle issues that relate to health in the broadest sense. Community development involves people working together to define and take action on issues affecting their lives³³. Community development challenges individuals, policies and practices that discriminate unfairly against anyone who is disadvantaged, because of a protected characteristic³⁴ and/or because of socio-economic position and limited opportunities³⁵. Working in this way has been identified as an important factor in reducing inequalities³⁶.

NHS guidance on community engagement has highlighted the difference between

³³ European Community Development Network, 2014, Community Development in Europe: Towards a common framework and understanding, EUCDN website: www.eucdn.net.

³⁴ The Equality Act, introduced in 2010, legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It sets out the different ways in which it is unlawful to treat someone on the basis of: age; gender, including gender diversity; disability; race, including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief; sexual identity; being pregnant or on maternity leave; being married or in a civil partnership.

³⁵ Introduction to Community Action on Health Annual Report 1998-1999. Community Action on Health was a project supported by West Newcastle Primary Care Group. A committee was elected annually via nominations from community groups across west Newcastle. The committee of local people acted on the health agenda of people living in inner and outer west Newcastle.

³⁶ Public Health England, 2018, Health matters: Community-centred approaches for health and wellbeing, Guidance, published 28 February 2018; NHS, 2017, Next Steps on the NHS Five Year Forward View, england.nhs.uk; NHS England, 2016, A guide for local areas developing Sustainability and Transformation Plans, Five Year Forward View; National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, 2016, Community engagement: Improving health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities, NICE guideline published 4 March 2016, nice.org.uk/guidance/ng44; Angela Coulter, 2010, Engaging communities for health improvement: A scoping study for the Health Foundation.

empowering community development processes, which can have a positive impact on people's health, and passive activity that some might still describe as involvement³⁷. Organisations like Riverside, whose work is underpinned by community development principles, build trust with local people. Riverside encourages communities, including those that have tended to be overlooked by providers, to be meaningfully involved in the commissioning and development of services. Involving people 'most in need' has been identified as crucial in reducing health inequalities³⁸.

At the end of the 1990s, in an increasingly ethnically diverse area, Newcastle West Primary Care Group³⁹ invested in community participation, and Riverside supported local people to be part of the West Primary Care Group Board and local practice based commissioning. In the early 2000s Riverside contributed to the Newcastle Health Action Zone Race Equality Area of Special Action⁴⁰. The Health Action Zone strategy document for involving people across black and minority ethnic communities referred to the value of community development work in west Newcastle. Riverside remains an active participant in the Health and Race Equality Forum (now referred to as Haref), which developed from the Race Equality Area of Special Action. Haref facilitates a quarterly Community Forum⁴¹, and Riverside supports local people from many different backgrounds to connect their knowledge and experiences with commissioning and service development processes. The Riverside team supports people to move out of isolation, get involved in things, develop skills, and build up a feeling of taking responsibility and control.

Doing something new is nerve-wracking and exciting. There are a lot of women like myself who are absolutely locked in their houses, not physically but mentally, and Riverside opens the door for us and helps us to be productive. getting out and mixing more. They don't sort out the problems, what they do is make it feel easier for us to manage.

It's a way of supporting people to move to where they want to be, knowing that different things can get in people's way like mental illness and feeling like you can't get out of the house. One of the very first people who took part in the volunteering training was someone who was part of a parents' group. They had had a good job, and then got to a place where they had no sense of purpose and no confidence in

³⁷ Public Health England, 2018, Health matters: Community-centred approaches for health and wellbeing, Guidance published 28 February 2018.

³⁸ Public Health England, 2017, Reducing health inequalities: system, scale and sustainability.

³⁹ Primary care groups were set up in 1999, each with a limited commissioning budget. Newcastle West Primary Care Group worked in partnership with local community and voluntary sector organisations, and invested in a Community Action on Health development worker. Community Action on Health was a framework for local people, including the most disadvantaged and marginalised groups, 'to set their health agenda, and to influence changes in service delivery in line with their views' (Anne Steele and Ann McNulty, 1999, Community Action on Health, Workshop on Participatory Health Development, Healthy Public Policy: A practised approach, UK Health Network for All Event, York, 10 November 1999).

⁴⁰ A multi-agency partnership steered a Health Action Zone programme of locality-based and thematic areas of special action (Newcastle Health Partnership, 1999, Establishing a fair chance in life: Tackling inequalities in Tyne and Wear, A plan for implementation of the Tyne and Wear HAZ in Newcastle 1998-2001).

⁴¹ Newcastle Community Forum is a space for people in disadvantaged and marginalised communities, and anyone working with them on a day to day basis, to get together with commissioners. The Community Forum has expanded to cover Newcastle-wide commissioning. It meets quarterly, twice a year in the Carers Centre in the east of the city, and twice in Carnegie Building in west Newcastle.

themselves. They were crying a lot and they came to Carnegie to ask about all sorts of things that they felt they couldn't cope with. We encouraged them to have a go with volunteering, and slowly and surely they've moved on in their life, to the point of being able to get back into working. They still have off-days. The difference is that now they have a goal and know they don't have to do it on their own. I can think of other people who have been feeling depressed and low, and taking part in the volunteering training has helped them move on. Some people have never had a certificate for anything before (Riverside).

While the partnerships Riverside is involved in cannot address certain causes of disadvantage, for example low pay⁴² and health inequalities linked to circumstances that are mainly outside the control of individual people⁴³, the team focuses on making a difference where possible.

Building trust across communities

One of the team's strengths is its ability to connect and build trust with people across communities. Because of this, Riverside has up-to-date and in-depth knowledge of local need.

During the evaluation period Riverside was a significant contributor to a report by a Newcastle City Council Health Scrutiny Panel Working Group⁴⁴ on equality of access to health services by people in black and minority ethnic communities.

Newcastle is similar to Sheffield as a city with a history of relatively small numbers of people migrating from different countries⁴⁵. Many have made their home in the west end⁴⁶. A 2000 Primary Care Group West briefing paper described west Newcastle as a part of the city where emerging Afghani, Croatian and Kurdish communities were living with people of South Asian, Turkish, Iranian, Malaysian, Chinese, and African Caribbean background⁴⁷. 2011 census data identified just over a third of Benwell residents as having been born in countries other than the UK (the figure was 2.2% in 1971), and Benwell, Elswick and Scotswood as wards with highest numbers of people from central and eastern Europe.

The community is growing and changing, and Riverside has adapted to respond to that without losing its values. There's a range of complexities, like trying to break through suspicion and build trust (Partner organisation).

⁴² In 2017 the Economic and Social Research Council highlighted that income inequality was higher in the UK than in several other European countries, and was set to increase (ESRC Evidence Briefing: Reducing income inequality, September 2017).

⁴³ Fiona Campbell, 2018, A matter of justice: Local government's role in tackling health inequalities, London: Local Government Association.

⁴⁴ Newcastle City Council Scrutiny Task and Finish Group, 2019, Equality of access to health care services by BAME communities, Final report and recommendations.

⁴⁵ David Robinson, Kesia Reeve, Rionach Casey, 2007, The housing pathways of new immigrants, Joseph Rowntree Foundation with Sheffield Hallam University Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research.

⁴⁶ UNISON and Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service, 2012, The Heart of the City: The Voluntary and Community Sector in Newcastle, Newcastle upon Tyne: UNISON.

⁴⁷ Shehla Naqvi, 2000, The context for a Race Equality Strategy within Primary Care Group West: Briefing Paper, Newcastle Healthy City.

In an area that has become increasingly ethnically diverse, Carnegie Building is a venue many people trust, and experience as welcoming and safe. Word spreads about it being a place where people from different communities can call in to find out what is going on, start to feel comfortable and supported, easily access information about a wide range of activities⁴⁸ that they might not otherwise have thought about, and get to know others.

The thing is you need confidence to start speaking. They're always trying to help you do things here. You can trust them. Riverside is like your starting point, where you can get information that opens up all the doors for you. They help you build your confidence so you can trust yourself to be able to sort things out yourself.

Carnegie is a comfortable place for people in distress and difficulty. It's more and more of an important community resource because of the economic situation (Partner organisation).

Strengthening confidence, connections, and wellbeing

Research evidence⁴⁹ identifies social connections and relationships as important factors in improving wellbeing, particularly for people living in the most difficult circumstances.

The 2010 Marmot Review suggested community participation, including volunteering, as a way of reducing isolation and boosting health. The Connected Communities programme⁵⁰ has produced evidence of the value of investment in activities that build and strengthen networks of social relationships, including improved skills for employment and better health. One of the Connected Communities reports describes increases in the wellbeing of participants who strengthened their social networks through community-led initiatives⁵¹.

Social connections, relationships that give support, community action, and having a voice in local decisions are all factors that underpin people having the best possible health⁵². The government's recent strategy for reducing loneliness⁵³ highlights the importance of connections, relationships and social networks for people's health and wellbeing, and of active outreach to people across different communities. The strategy document (p.14)

⁴⁸ Riverside's range of activities includes: children's play sessions; educational courses; women's and men's groups; visits to new parents in their homes to tell them about local services; space for community groups and/or meetings; support with money management; English skills for people who have another first language; pathways into paid employment; volunteering training and placements.

⁴⁹ Building resilient communities: Making every contact count for public mental health, 2013.

⁵⁰ The Connected Communities programme, involving the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce, the University of Central Lancashire's Centre for Citizenship and Community, and the Personal Social Services Research Unit at the London School of Economics, explored a vision of local social support networks, reduced isolation, and improved health. The project aimed to develop best practice in using evidence to support local work that builds connections and boosts people's wellbeing.

⁵¹ Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce, 2015, Community Capital: The Value of Connected Communities, p.7.

⁵² Public Health England, 2019, Guidance: Place-based approaches for reducing health inequalities: main report. The guidance identifies action to reduce health inequalities as being an investment for England's national and local economies. Place-based approaches recognise the need to address wider determinants of health.

⁵³ HM Government, 2018, A connected society: A strategy for tackling loneliness, laying the foundations for change, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

emphasises the importance of willingness to test something out and learn from the process. Riverside has been doing this for almost forty years.

Through what one person in a partner organisation describes as a patchwork of activities, Riverside introduces people to the information they need to feel empowered to have best possible health and wellbeing. Some are at the hard 'edge'⁵⁴, experiencing poverty, uncertainty, anxiety and ill health at the point at which they connect with Riverside. Some are barely surviving. Riverside engages with the complexity of their lives in the context of systems 'built up over decades, originally designed to support and enable but now too frequently presenting simply another layer of challenge'⁵⁵. Riverside makes sure that people are not lost within various systems, and works with them in ways that enhance their own resources and strengths so they can move forward in their lives. Workers are aware of the fine line between dependency and empowerment.

Riverside has got me out and meeting people. Now I can speak to someone on the phone. Before I wouldn't have done that. You walk in the main entrance and there's a lovely atmosphere. I used to worry and worry and make myself ill. The group has been a big experience for me.

A lot of anxiety and depression would sneak in. When I went to Riverside I felt better about myself. I was doing something. I did Maths and English and then felt confident to go to the college.

A person comes in the front door of Carnegie and starts to feel comfortable, then they can go out through all sorts of other doors, getting to know new people and doing new things and feeling good about themselves (Riverside).

The whole team's brilliant and builds a bridge of connection with people who are feeling isolated, supporting them to get involved with things (Partner organisation).

Riverside is very practical and they're based in the heart of the community. They have drop-ins and use different vehicles for encouraging people to come in and feel comfortable, and then they start to filter in information (Partner organisation).

There is progression for people rather than "Well that's it, you've done that course". There is engagement, then follow-through. If Riverside wasn't there, a lot of people would go under silently. There is an opportunity for people to have more productive lives here in Newcastle (Partner organisation).

Riverside supports people to find solutions that will work for them, outlining options and not telling people what to do. Some of the people they work with have been hurt by other people and don't or can't trust anybody, and are stuck in the system. Riverside's relationships of trust can support people to make changes (Partner organisation).

⁵⁴ The North East Poverty Declaration refers to a cutting edge of poverty, and waste of potential of people who experience multiple disadvantage and marginalisation (barnardos.org.uk/northeastpovertydeclaration).

⁵⁵ Tricia Zipfel, Jo Tunnard, Josephine Feeney, Audrey Flannagan, Loretta Gaffney, Karen Postle, Frances O'Grady, Sally Young and Fran Bennett, 2015, Our Lives: Challenging attitudes to poverty in 2015, Sheffield: Centre for Welfare Reform, p.5.

The workers do a lot of preparation to get people to the point where they can take part in sessions and courses. The courses are not what the organisation needs, they are based on what the community members need (Partner organisation).

Riverside's empowering approach is illustrated in the theme of the 2020 International Women's Day event: "I'm going to do something about it". Women were welcomed with a message that activism has the word 'act' in it, and activism can mean doing things like joining a group, looking after someone, or saying you disagree with something that's said. Women around the tables in the meeting room shared things they have done to make a change, for themselves and/or for others, and how their activism has made them feel, for example strong, brave, confident and independent.

A graphic was displayed via projector screen, with three drawings, each with three people of different height trying to watch something going on behind a fence in front of them. In the first drawing each of the three people has been given the same size box to stand on, and this means that the tallest person can comfortably see over the fence, the person of middle height can just about see over the fence, and the smallest person can't see over. This represents equality of opportunity, with each person being given the same advantage without existing difference between them being taken into account. The second drawing shows each person standing on a box of different height, making it possible for them all to look over the fence. This is equity. In the third drawing the fence has been taken away, and this is justice.

A range of wall and table displays gave information and promoted discussion about women's activism. A wandering poet started up discussions around experiences of birth; baking across the generations; loss of industry like mining and lack of subsequent investment in the north-east; assumptions about working class women with north-east accents. In a range of practical workshops, including banner making, sprouting seeds, pilates, and head massage, discussion went on around children; housework and household management; birthdays; remembering doing art and crafts at school; jobs on offer at the moment.

Supporting people to learn, train, volunteer, and move into employment

Riverside recognises local people's potential and develops opportunities for them to get qualifications and work-based experience. Some have been out of work for long periods, for various reasons, and Riverside's pathways help them to build their confidence.

Riverside offers a range of learning, training and volunteering pathways, the value of which is highlighted in recent reports⁵⁶.

The Riverside team has developed more formal pathways for learning, training and volunteering, in response to local people's requests.

People started asking for maths sessions and support for English, particularly writing skills. People with English as a second or third language wanted to improve their English so they could think about jobs like teaching assistant. We thought about what else would be of value, like the security badge course. All of the others

⁵⁶ Amy McGarvey, Véronique Jochum, John Davies, Joy Dobbs, Lisa Hornung, 2019, Time Well Spent: A national survey on the volunteer experience, London: National Council for Voluntary Organisations; Lisa Hornung, Jack Egan, Véronique Jochum, 2017, Getting Involved: How people make a difference, London: National Council for Voluntary Organisations.

(learning and training sessions) have been in response to what people have said (Riverside).

When people get involved in volunteering here, it's because it's for them. They're making choices for themselves. They come in to Carnegie Building because they want to. This feels like a good route for them (Riverside).

National Lottery Reaching Communities funding has supported Riverside to further develop training and volunteering pathways, including an ASDAN programme⁵⁷. The team takes time to set up pathways that work for local people.

Target outcomes for people across the age range:

- improved social connection for people identified as experiencing isolation
- improved health and wellbeing
- improved sense of self worth.

The Riverside Chief Executive is responsible for overall training and volunteering programme management, and the Project and Finance Lead manages the Volunteer and Training team. A full time Volunteer and Training Coordinator oversees recruitment, one to one mentoring and communication with partner organisations. This role is supported by a full time trainee Coordinator who manages the courses, including booking rooms and keeping learners and volunteers up to date with opportunities.

Learning/training

Riverside offers accredited and certificated learning/training pathways, with one to one support as needed. People working in local care homes can take part in sessions, for example on medicine handling and infection control. The range of accredited courses includes:

- Functional skills in Maths
- Functional skills in English
- English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)
- Distance learning
- ASDAN
- Teaching assistant level 2
- Early years education
- Mental health awareness level 2
- Paediatric first aid
- Food hygiene level 2
- Understanding autism
- Care of children and young people
- Security Industry Authority badge
- Beauty Therapy
- Have a go at enterprise
- Counselling skills

Certificated training sessions include:

- Lifting and handling

⁵⁷ ASDAN is a charitable social enterprise providing UK and international courses. Its programmes offer flexible ways to accredit skills for learning, employment, and life. ASDAN's courses encourage participation in community settings, promoting resilience and emotional and social skills, www.asdan.org.uk.

- Safeguarding children
- Safeguarding adults
- Paediatric first aid
- Basic first aid
- Autism awareness
- Behaviour that challenges
- Health and safety at work
- Equality and diversity
- Effective communication
- Data protection and confidentiality
- Community Interpreting level 1.

Volunteering

Programmes underpinned by community development principles have been found to give significant returns on financial investment, in relation to money saved annually per person taking part in volunteering⁵⁸.

Reviews of research into health benefits of volunteering⁵⁹ have shown improvement in: mental health, including levels of depression; the ability to do day to day things; social support and interaction; and ability to cope with long-term illness. Interventions such as group programmes and community based art and creative activities can strengthen social networks, reduce isolation and increase levels of social support. Involvement in learning has been shown to improve people's mental health and reduce the risk of depression.

There is evidence that volunteering is beneficial for people's mental and physical health, with potential to increase feelings of motivation and wellbeing, raise self-esteem, and reduce stress. It can improve people's social support and feelings of competence and confidence⁶⁰. Analysis of data from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing⁶¹ showed improved wellbeing for older volunteers compared with people not volunteering.

In 2017 Riverside was assessed as excellent in recruiting, involving, supporting and retaining volunteers.

People develop themselves at Riverside. The volunteering opportunities stand out because they're about people growing and learning, and it's the only place where they understand barriers to opportunities, like the need for childcare. Their capacity-building and work on rights and responsibilities stand out. They really take an empowering route, and they add massive value to provision as a whole (Partner organisation).

Riverside was one of the first third sector organisations in the region to receive an

⁵⁸ Building resilient communities: Making every contact count for public mental health, 2013, p.18. Part of a series produced on behalf of the Mental Health Strategic Partnership with Department of Health funding.

⁵⁹ Rachel Casiday, 2015, Volunteering and Health: What impact does it really have?, University of Wales Lampeter page 27; Caroline Jenkinson et al., 2013, Is volunteering a public health intervention? A systematic review and meta-analysis of the health and survival of volunteers, BMC Public Health, 13:773.

⁶⁰ Mental Health Foundation, 2012, Doing good does you good: A pocket guide to helping others.

⁶¹ James Nazroo and Katey Matthews, 2012, The impact of volunteering on well-being in later life, A report to Women's Royal Volunteering Service, Cardiff: WRVS.

Investors in Volunteering award⁶². It received the award again in 2020. A 2015 estimate of the monetary value of time worked by volunteers supported by Riverside was over £40,000⁶³.

Formal volunteering pathways have developed over the last eight years. People can take part in volunteering training without having to take up a placement straight away, or at all. Riverside's training and volunteering pathways are flexible, with people able to move between them in line with what they need.

Riverside piloted an ASDAN⁶⁴ programme as one of its pathways supporting local people to live active lives, with positive outcomes at both individual and wider community levels. ASDAN offers an opportunity to participate in a coordinated comprehensive training and volunteer programme and be awarded a single certificate. Funding covers registration costs, course materials, and travel expenses.

This pathway fits the Riverside model of accessible, flexible opportunities that meet the needs of people with, for example, caring responsibilities, irregular shift patterns, and a level of confidence that can make it difficult for them to join in activities. ASDAN sessions are between 9am and 3pm, fitting around school drop off and collection times.

Some people, who've struggled to do things, feel more confident and able to have a go. Often people have no idea what they can do. Yes, they might feel frightened and it might be hard when they start. We're here to support people to feel comfortable and get going (Riverside).

Recruitment has involved telling people who come in to Riverside about the ASDAN opportunity. Some people come in asking about volunteering and we tell them about all the options, including ASDAN and getting everything in ten weeks. Some people are carers and want to have more social contact. For them it's about feeling isolated, and that affecting their mental health and wellbeing (Riverside).

People who take part in an ASDAN course can have a go at learning things that are part of the overall programme, that they might not have thought of or chosen.

The ASDAN programme has various elements of training. It might be the first time that people are going to do training they haven't chosen themselves (Riverside).

The training and volunteering team spent time visiting local organisations to discuss the possibility of placements, including opportunities in the NHS, retail, catering, and social care. Partnerships with Workers Education Association, Newcastle College and Newcastle City Learning are important in providing an holistic support package for volunteers. The team networks with a range of organisations who may have volunteering opportunities, and who can also refer local people to Riverside's training and volunteering pathways. Riverside has expanded volunteering opportunities in Carnegie Building.

A volunteer portal has been installed on Riverside's website to support operational

⁶² Investors in Volunteering is the UK quality standard for good practice in volunteer management.

⁶³ Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service, 2015, Spotlight, Inform pp.18-19.

⁶⁴ See Appendix 2 for more information about the ASDAN programme.

management of the project and improve communication with volunteers. The Volunteer Coordinator regularly updates it and adds new vacancies.

People have volunteered in Carnegie Building, local schools, and other community venues, for example:

- Credit Union collection points in six west Newcastle primary schools
- local Food Bank
- local Family Day with the theme of being a good neighbour
- group sessions and mini-events in Carnegie Building
- café sessions at Riverside
- Riverside's children's activities (Toddle Time; Breakfast Club; Wriggle and Rhymes)
- Riverside's Parent and Toddler Group
- International Women's Day events
- Open Clasp⁶⁵ performance
- International Roma Day celebrations
- World Mental Health Day events.
- Riverside Engage 2 Change⁶⁶ events
- Community Marshals at the Festival of Lights and Love your Lane⁶⁷ community safety events

Volunteering opportunities for young people

Riverside opened up the ASDAN opportunity to local young people via a Stepping Stones certificate for 7 to 16 year olds. Play in Newcastle, a specialist youth provision service based in Carnegie Building, delivered the under 16s programme to a group of young people already volunteering as mentors in Canning Street Primary School⁶⁸.

The background to Riverside developing the ASDAN pathway for young people was the team knowing about a monitors system that had been set up in Canning Street Primary School in October 2018. The monitors idea came from a small group of young people who had been supervising the school pet club. Their idea developed into a system of year 6 monitors⁶⁹, recruited, trained, and trusted to take on the responsibility of organising activities for others in the school, with adult supervision.

The monitors act as buddies for children who are isolated and feel lonely. Children can talk to them, and they organise games and activities in the school playground. They look after equipment and help to keep it stored safely in the school shed. They have introduced a once a week lunchtime arts and crafts activities programme for children in reception class.

⁶⁵ Open Clasp is an award winning women's theatre company in Newcastle upon Tyne. Open Clasp works with women to 'shine a light on their experiences' and create theatre 'for personal, social and political change' (openclasp.org.uk).

⁶⁶ In 2017 Riverside introduced Engage 2 Change events. These are held several times a year in the early evening so that people in employment can take part. They bring together local people, emergency services, the council, and support services for victims of crime, for information exchange.

⁶⁷ Love your Lanes is a community project for people in west Newcastle. A partnership involving Newcastle City Council, Your Homes Newcastle, and Newcastle Tenants and Residents Federation manages the project, which brings people from different communities together to make the most of their outside spaces.

⁶⁸ Canning Street Primary School is close to Carnegie Building, off Condercum Road in Benwell.

⁶⁹ Year 6 is the final year in primary school.

The school community benefits by having the monitors in the school yard at lunch time and break time. They are easy for children and adults to see because they each wear a yellow vest and a monitors badge.

Each monitor has a level of autonomy, and works as part of the whole team. The outcome of the first year of the system is a group of confident reliable monitors who are looked up to by younger children as positive role models.

The Riverside training and volunteer team adapted the ASDAN programme for younger people. Play in Newcastle workers developed age appropriate material and facilitated sessions:

- Safety and First Aid, covering what to say when you ring 999; home hazards, including wordsearch as way in to discussion; writing safety messages eg about car seat belts; what to check if someone is unresponsive, not breathing normally, choking, bleeding; the recovery position; things that are poisonous; kitchen safety, using pictures for spotting dangers and asking the young people to draw a picture of a safe kitchen; what to do if someone has an asthma attack; how to approach dogs in the street; fire safety; what to do if you/someone else has a strain or sprain; what to have in a first aid kit; first aid quiz
- Playtime, including what to do in playtime, indoor and outdoor; ways to make playtime safe; managing games, including being inclusive of everyone
- Feelings, involving thinking about different feelings and emotions; matching up words describing different emotions with cartoon faces showing range of feelings; thinking about when we feel different feelings eg completing sentences such as “I was surprised when...”; ways of relating well with others
- Friendship, thinking about “who I am” eg family and favourite things; image of cooking pot and circles for ingredients for a recipe for wellbeing; true/false quiz about friends and others; A-Z of kindness
- Food, involving discussion of healthy food, with lots of picture games; food crossword; what’s my favourite food; reading lists of ingredients on food packaging; safe cooking.

Impact: Pathways to change

This section shows how Riverside makes a difference in relation to:

- improved social connection for people identified as experiencing isolation
- improved health and wellbeing
- improved sense of self worth.

People who have taken part in one or more of Riverside’s broad range of learning, training and volunteering pathways have reported feeling less isolated, with increased confidence, knowledge and skills, as well as improved understanding of what volunteering involves and its benefits.

Making a difference with young people

Eight young women in year 6, Czech Roma, Bengali, Romanian, and white British, achieved an ASDAN certificate through a pilot programme organised by Riverside.

As a group they shared what they have got out of being monitors and taking part in the adapted training programme. They gave examples of information they have retained from sessions with the Play Newcastle workers, on first aid, healthy eating, the importance of handwashing, and kitchen safety. The workers taught them how to play team games and they passed on what they learned to other young people through setting up indoor and outdoor activities. They organised arts and crafts activities during Wednesday lunchtime breaks, and set up a rota of three of them at a time taking responsibility for planning and facilitating a session.

The young women described the ASDAN sessions as fun, involving things that are useful for them now and for the future. They said they will be taking what they have learnt with them in their move to secondary school, for example understanding the value of working with others, and recognising their own ability to do things.

We worked together and got to understand each other.

At the start we had so many ideas and we didn't know what to do first, then we worked together and turned it around.

When we started off there was some friendship trouble, and when we started doing the monitoring we weren't that good so we learnt from what didn't work and we realised we had to work at it and be confident in ourselves. We will have to do things for ourselves when we go to the big school. We've got used to doing that and we feel more confident, and younger children will have seen us doing that.

They have boosted their self esteem through being a volunteer monitor.

I feel proud. I think doing this is an inspiration for everyone in the school.

A girl said to me "I want to be like you when I grow up".

I used to keep to myself and I've come out of my shell a lot. It feels good that I'm more confident now. Last week I talked with the governors about what we do as monitors and that was really good, and they said they were very proud of what we were doing, and I felt proud as well.

A member of the school staff team has skilfully supported the group to work together and build new skills. The young women talked about learning how to manage situations that are not straightforward. In regular Monday review meetings they have discussed situations they have found themselves in, shared ideas about what to do, and made decisions together. In their meetings they have rotated responsibilities, including chair; board writer capturing main action points; and minute taker.

I just love the way that, as a group, everyone takes part and does their job and doesn't quit. Now we work as a team. We aren't all friends and we don't have to be.

The coolest thing is that there has been some falling out between friends and we've got over it.

Being a volunteer monitor has involved practising speaking assertively to set boundaries, including challenging difficult behaviour where necessary.

We learnt about when to say "no" and be assertive and get it across to the younger ones that they do have to listen to us. If there's an incident we take responsibility for it.

You learn how to change the tone of your voice. We practised it with each other.

We talked about how important it is not to let the bully get to you, and to report it to a teacher. That'll show anyone who's a bully that you won't let them get away with being nasty, and you won't let yourself down.

The young women talked about the value of getting to know other young people in school, and developing empathy without feeling overwhelmed.

The best thing is to be with the other children and see them being happy, playing games. We get to know their personalities.

When I see the younger people sad I can become upset as well. I feel the emotions they have.

I feel like being a monitor brought me closer to other people, listening to them and getting to know them.

The things that the young women shared in group discussion showed how they have built on their own strengths through working together, and developed a greater sense of confidence in themselves.

Riverside has explored the possibility for further young people's ASDAN courses with local schools and Play Newcastle, taking information about the programme to the Community and Family Hub Advisory Group meeting and the Schools Trust and leaving it with them to pursue.

Making a difference with adults

The team has worked closely with adults taking part in training and volunteering pathways, and encouraged them to work together and support each other.

One of us would take the lead on the activities we were doing each Monday afternoon, while the other would support the people taking part on a one to one basis. We found working with them one to one encouraged, supported and valued them as individuals. Their confidence was building throughout each session and they were all becoming more confident in a group setting. We felt that the learners really benefited from being part of a group as some had never been in that social setting and really struggled with their confidence. We encouraged them to work in pairs and give each other feedback about each bit of the course they completed. They took it upon themselves to support other learners who were struggling (Riverside).

Some women didn't get the cross-referencing that they needed to do when they were filling in their record books. It was quite a complicated thing, so we introduced structured support on how to match work done to the different targets, and how to show evidence of achievements. We kept tweaking the development of the training programme (Riverside).

Working one to one also helped them to think about and plan their future and look at the next step they could take, whether employment, volunteering or further training (Riverside).

The team responded to the nervousness and anxiety of some participants by introducing ice breakers at the beginning of sessions, getting people to work together to find answers.

For some learners English is their second language, and because of this some of the context in the course needed to be explained in more detail. We worked closely with them to ensure they had a better understanding and were able to complete the

required task. We found that people in the groups would support and encourage each other throughout tasks, and helped one another to complete the necessary paper work (Riverside).

The team focused throughout on maintaining as effective a learning environment as possible, given day to day challenges and time constraints for many local people. At the end of the first year of the evaluation period the team adapted the system of one to one support to encourage participants to develop confidence and independence. From January 2020 they added SIGNAL⁷⁰ training to the ASDAN programme.

Team members have reflected on what they are most proud of. They have seen positive change for people who took part in the first year's courses.

We have seen learners progress each week, with their confidence vastly improving. They have built both their confidence and their self-esteem while gaining a certificate and adding to their transferable skills. Some of the adult learners have signed up for a year long course, such as Teaching Assistant and Early Years which are both at NCFE level 2 (Riverside).

People who have taken part in confidence-building, training and volunteering pathways have talked about feeling valued, describing how the experience has given them a sense of belonging in their neighbourhood as well as equipping them to move on in their lives.

I came here and learnt a lot and feel very confident now. In the future things will be good. I am very positive about that. I feel proud of myself because I didn't stay down. I got up and feel stronger. I came to Riverside at the right time, just when I needed the support.

You can get help for a job. They do courses to get people ready for employment and Riverside helps people to connect to a range of jobs. One young man in our community has joined the police force.

One man has been volunteering at Riverside, keeping the entrance of Carnegie Building and the outside areas clean. The team introduced him to Scotswood Community Garden and now he volunteers there (Riverside).

It gets people work ready in a more condensed way, in a time-limited programme. They get all the certificates they need to start to apply for things. The sessions get people to think about the importance of things like ringing in to where you work if you're ill. People get to think about the whole discipline of working and making a commitment to the place where you work. And some people get a lot out of being part of the group going through the training (Riverside).

It's a step into employment for people who haven't been in work for a while. They can experience a work environment and build their confidence up. The sessions

⁷⁰ Riverside has introduced a SIGNAL system to review the effectiveness of its provision. SIGNAL is a digital system that enables individuals and households to identify their priorities via a picture-based platform which can aggregate data. Organisations can use the data to better understand household and community needs and underlying issues. SIGNAL is designed to be of equal value to people as individuals, households, communities, commissioners, providers, and policy-makers. It measures the impact of service provision by tracking changes in people's circumstances. It gives people motivation, agency and power to develop their own action plan with support from organisations.

cover things like policies and procedures in organisations, including an introduction to Riverside's, so they get to learn about the structure of somewhere like here and how everything works well. There's discussion of roles and responsibilities (Riverside).

The following extended extract is from an interview⁷¹ with one of the adults involved with Riverside's volunteering programme, who also completed the ASDAN course. It illustrates how life events can get in the way of people fulfilling their potential, and the importance of positive pathways that build on their strengths and help them get to where they want to be.

I had a normal upbringing from what I can remember. I was quite quiet when growing up, nothing like I am now. My parents were quite strict and as I was the oldest, the rules were made for me. I was not very social as an early teenager and was not really interested in doing things like going to town on Saturday afternoon or going out much during the week until I was around fourteen. At school I was OK. I found art easy and I was very good at PE. I did a lot of team sports and competitions at school. Long distance running was my favourite sport. I had my first boyfriend at fifteen and everyone was shocked when I got pregnant. It was the last thing anybody expected and my mam and dad were very upset. I managed to keep my pregnancy a secret from them for seven and a half months because I didn't want to tell them as I didn't want to be a disappointment to them. However to my surprise, after the initial shock they were determined that it was not going to be a tragedy for me. Pregnancy meant that I never took my passion for sport to the next level, or reached my full potential. I couldn't because I was pregnant and so my PE lessons and swimming had to stop. After my baby was born I attended Ashlyn's, a school for girls with babies where I continued all my studies and passed all the exams that I took. My parents did not hold me back and supported me by helping to care for my baby while I finished my education. The school for girls with babies was so positive. They helped you get through all the exams. I went back to ordinary school for A levels and I remember the art teacher walked around the class with my baby so I could do my art. Later on when we had our sons my partner took time off work for a bit to care for our children while I went to college so I could pursue my passion to become a qualified florist which I did in 2008. I then ran my own florist which I enjoyed for a while but it was very lonely and working hours were long and the stress started to take its toll on me, with a year of depression. Eventually I decided I needed to get back out in the world. My partner saw an advert on Facebook posted by a friend for a volunteer reception placement at Riverside. I thought at the time that that would be ideal as I would get experience with no pressure. I was yet to realise how much I would love it and I am not sure if it is the organisation or the people I work with but finally I feel I have found my place in the world. I want to support people to be in jobs and to do the training they want to do regardless of the boundaries they may think they have. I'd like to explore a bit more of what I do now by completing my level 3 training in Management of Volunteers. I fell into working in the voluntary sector through being a volunteer receptionist myself. It's not something I ever thought I'd do. And while I am still growing and I'm not where I want to be just yet, I am confident I will get there.

⁷¹ The woman's edited story was one of several produced for the 2019 International Women's Day event organised by Riverside.

One of the participants on the first ASDAN course at the beginning of 2019 talked about her experience of missing out on education and being in a violent relationship. Through moving to Newcastle and connecting with Riverside she has been able to take advantage of opportunities for learning.

The start of my story is from when I got married at a young age. It was an arranged marriage. If I hadn't have taken the step to come to Newcastle I would still be being controlled ... I had only gone to school for a few years. Teachers came to the house and mum would say I was away. Thank goodness for current UK law, because children have to be in school and parents can't keep them at home. They get to have their education. I managed to get across to Newcastle in my early twenties ... I was very lonely. I am what I am now because of what I've been through. If you'd asked a couple of years ago I would have said I was in a bad place. Now I feel independent, with a lovely home. I get lots of support from people in different communities, and from Riverside ... I have been volunteering in my children's school, and they are very proud. Getting in contact with other women at the Angelou Centre and at Riverside has given me courage. I have got more confidence. I've seen women from different countries being completely isolated ... I want people to know there is something out there, and for them to keep strong.

Women who took part in an interview at the end of their respective training pathways talked about feeling less isolated through increased opportunities to interact with others. Each said, in their own words, that they feel better in themselves and have greater self-worth and confidence⁷²:

I have bad social anxiety and this course helped me a lot. I've never had a job before and I thought this could be a helpful route into employment. I looked forward to coming and I managed to come to each week's session. It was good to have something to leave the house for once a week. I hadn't heard about Riverside before the workers came to Action for Children. I feel comfortable here.

I worked from 16 to 18 and then I had my son and wanted to spend time with him. Now it's hard to get in to work and I feel depressed. As a volunteer here I meet new people and everyone's friendly. When you come to Riverside you feel better. You're not just sitting in the house. On the ASDAN course I wrote everything down and I keep that file in the house. It built my confidence up. I never used to approach people to talk to them and now I say "hello". Being here lifts my mood.

I'm a really shy person so the course has built my confidence. The course really has made me much more confident. I used to feel anxious about talking to people, and get panic attacks.

I saw the course advertised on Riverside's Facebook page and I sent a message. They got in touch and sent me the details. I'm interested in getting back to work. I've enjoyed the course. I feel more confident, learning new things. I never used to speak to anyone at all.

I got to know the others in the group and it's brought my confidence right back up. At first it felt a bit iffy and I thought I was going to be the oldest, and then everyone was really friendly.

⁷² Target outcomes: Reduced social isolation; Improved health and wellbeing; Improved sense of self-worth.

I went to the Red Cross and they said go to Riverside. One of the most important things for me was meeting new people. We got to know each other in the ASDAN group and it opened our minds to each other.

I get nervous when I meet people and it felt good to do the course and get lots of information. I like to listen and learn and I want to know how to do things. I don't have any qualifications from this country. It's good for my English to do the course. I was unconfident before and that's better now. I am getting used to talking to new people.

One of the participants talked about her experience of anxiety and loneliness when she arrived in Newcastle as an overseas postgraduate student with her husband and children, and of the difference that engaging with Riverside has made for her.

We always stayed at home after dark because we were anxious about something happening if we went out ... I started coming to Riverside, which is an amazing place. I did lots of volunteering here and took part in the Staying Afloat programme. I am doing the ASDAN training now. This has been my journey. When we moved here my country was an amazing place, and then the war started ... Sometimes because of my hijab some people don't trust me a lot. I have felt isolated. I kept in touch with Riverside through Facebook and saw the ASDAN course. I rang and they explained what it was and gave me the dates. I got a place and they kept in touch with me and checked I was coming. After ASDAN I feel I can do things. I feel as though the whole course was saying to me "I dare you to have a go..." and now I'm trying new things.

Following quotes highlight the advantage of training and volunteering pathways being an integral part of the wide range of things happening in Carnegie Building, a place where people are coming in all the time. There was feedback about the friendliness of the workers, making it easy to check out learning, training, volunteering and employment opportunities on offer.

I heard about ASDAN because I was coming to Riverside to volunteer in the café on Mondays. I started coming to Riverside when my son was a baby and Sure Start was based here. I wanted to be a volunteer so I would have something to do, and to get experience for a job.

I came in to book a party here at Riverside, and they told me about everything going on, including a sessional post coming up. It's great to be in work. I work as a volunteer at the parents and toddlers group downstairs here at Riverside on a Wednesday afternoon. I support two of the mams who run it. In September I'm going on to level 2 childcare. My son's going into reception class so that gives me the time.

I've done the ASDAN course and I volunteer here at Riverside now as well. I've filled in the forms for that. I've just seen the information about a teaching assistant course on Facebook so I'm going to check that out.

Feedback illustrates the added value of Riverside being known and trusted by local people who encourage family and friends to go along and get involved. Partner organisations share information about what's on offer, and signpost people they are working with to Carnegie Building.

I got to know about ASDAN when Action for Children were working with me. I was on their Parents on the Ball course. Someone from Riverside came and talked to us about all the courses they have. I came to Riverside and met the volunteer team and they helped me choose which course would be best. They were really easy to talk to. When I started the ASDAN course it was good to have already met them.

My daughter told me about the course. It's the first one I've done at Riverside.

At my kids school the family supporter told me about courses at Riverside. I hadn't been here before. We did different things on the ASDAN course, like food hygiene, communication, and equality and diversity.

A friend told me that a new course was starting. I came to Riverside and they told me when the course was. It's been a good experience and an opportunity to do volunteering and get a placement. It has been good to come here and meet new people. Everyone is friendly.

I went to Jet⁷³ and they said go to Riverside. The course has given us information about lots of things. I feel comfortable here. Everyone is very friendly.

For people with English as a second or third language, taking part in the ASDAN programme boosts confidence and skills in understanding, speaking and writing English.

The course has helped me build my English language. It's a good environment to discuss different topics. This is a good opportunity for me in my life. It's important to study and make contact with other people.

My husband encouraged me to do the course and I enjoyed all of it. This course has really helped me with English. It's built my confidence and now I'm doing a course at my children's school.

My parents told me about the course. I want to work, and this has been lots of learning, with a chance to get practice in English language. Some of the learners whose first language is not English have really benefited from being in a group setting as they have been able to develop their spoken and written English, and their understanding of the language. This is because they have been using English during the training sessions and with the other learners, which helped them to build confidence. At the beginning some of the women needed one to one support to help with understanding some of the questions and challenges. However by the end of the course we have seen learners building their confidence and self-esteem (Riverside).

Feedback highlights the value of the Riverside team understanding that people come to sessions knowing things already. Their learning and training pathways build on existing knowledge and introduce new information. The team is flexible in designing the structure and pace of sessions. Participants gave positive feedback about the external tutor creating a comfortable learning environment.

On the course I learnt new things and got extra bits of information. I'd done some of the training before and I'd forgotten, so it was a refresher.

⁷³ JET is a registered advice and guidance charity in Newcastle upon Tyne. It helps people from black and minority ethnic communities, including refugees and people seeking asylum, to find work.

The course was good, just one day a week, so it wasn't bombarding you. I have to have things slow and easy because I have dyslexia. We all got on well in the group. It was the same tutor for almost all of the sessions, apart from food hygiene, so we could get to know him. On the course a lot of it is stuff you already know something about, so it's good to get brought up to date and then get a certificate.

I've learnt things I didn't know about, and other things that I hadn't understood, like data protection. I really understand it now. I did the course over nine Mondays. You can add on extras if you want and I did paediatric first-aid. The tutor made us all feel welcome, and said: "If you've any questions just ask".

It's been good and I got to know lots of things. The trainer is absolutely brilliant and explains everything in detail and checks if anyone has any questions. We've learnt something new each week. The tutor does a presentation on the big screen and always says to ask if you need to. You get a copy of all the information to put in your file. I've got to know people.

It was an amazing course. The tutor was very experienced and professional, and had humour and warmth. It was not something you had to struggle with, it was just one day a week of working and eating together. The teamwork was good. I discovered that one of the women on the course is my neighbour. I had never met her before. After lunch, in each session the workers supported us to fill in the paperwork. There was flexibility. It was within school hours, and you had an opportunity to catch up if you missed anything in a session. I had time for my prayers. I learnt a lot of things, like safeguarding and to always check things out if you have any concerns when you're working with people with some vulnerability. I learnt about food hygiene, and about confidentiality.

I loved it when (colleague) said to the people in the group: "You can introduce yourself but you don't have to just now" (Riverside).

Participants talked about the ways in which they have been encouraged and supported, illustrating the skills and approach of the volunteering team.

The workbook was easy to do yourself when everything was explained. If you had any issues you could just go to the team and they'd help. They're so supportive here. They'll try their hardest to help you out.

The women who supported us on the course were always there to help us if we were struggling. They keep in touch.

We often did little quizzes in the afternoon for fun and team building.

The volunteer team reassure you all the time and they tell us that nobody's better than anyone else. Everyone has come out of their shells. There's encouragement and not too much pressure.

If we don't understand anything or need help then the workers help us sort everything out.

People talked about their volunteering placements, with some already planning their next learning pathway.

Now I have two volunteering placements. From the end of January (2019) I've been a teaching assistant with English learners, once a week. Sometimes they call and ask if I can do another session. Two of us who were on the course are running a women's drop-in group. It's mainly women from Iran and Turkey who are learning English, and we do walking and crafts and there is a free lunch. There are four to five women at the moment. We're getting publicity out through Facebook.

Riverside helped me get my placement, starting off an art group in a community centre. I've set up a frame with a proggy mat where people come in to the building, and a lot of them come over and talk about memories of people in their families and where they grew up, making mats like that. It's mainly men who come in, older men, and they tell me their stories. There are some women and one talked about her neighbour having a tool for making proggy mats. I've put things out for drawing, painting, sewing and colouring in. I've been working a day a week during term-time. Over the summer holidays my mum's looking after my son one day a week so I'm doing some family workshops.

My volunteer placement is going to be in a care home and I am coming back to Riverside to do additional learning in August.

People from Riverside and from partner organisations across sectors have shared their view of the value of the learning, training and volunteering pathways the team has developed.

One of the volunteers has had quite a few different roles at Riverside, the Breakfast Club, and the parent-run Toddler Group which she ran until March (2020) when things shut. She has always been keen to help out at other events at Riverside, and to help other women. Another volunteer did level 2 NVQ in Childcare and has been a sessional crèche worker for a year and a half. If anyone doesn't seem comfortable in a volunteer role, we discuss that with them, and with the Training and Volunteer Coordinator, and support them to move to another role that suits them more. Some need more confidence building than others. Supported volunteer placements mean they can build up their confidence so they can move on to get a job. Volunteering gives them something to get up and out for. Some women who have been very isolated come along to the women's group, then they move on to training and volunteering. They come in for one thing and go on to other things. We do volunteer progress forms⁷⁴ with people, highlighting any further training needs. That helps them get to where they want to be (Riverside).

We have a good relationship with Riverside. We want to support local people into work and we signpost people to them. When we can accommodate volunteers on placement, we do, and we benefit from that as well. Two people who have volunteered with us have gone on to employment here. There's very good communication with (name of the Training and Volunteer Coordinator). Over the past three years we have had more than fifteen volunteers. Two have had English as a second language. People start with a course with Riverside, such as ESOL or ASDAN, things we don't have the capacity to run, and that starts them on getting out of the spiral of not feeling confident enough to do things. One person I can think of wouldn't have been able to look at anyone else. Now she's built up confidence from stepping over the doorstep and trying things. That can be huge, and that's

⁷⁴ See Appendix 3.

what Riverside does, it supports people to feel able to do things, and to learn. The team is really accommodating and they will do what they can to help people feel comfortable enough to have a go at a training session (Partner organisation).

During the six months from March 2020, Riverside has focused on maintaining people's wellbeing and self-confidence. The team has supported people through closedown, encouraging them to follow through with new opportunities.

There's building work at Carnegie and I got involved in doing some publicity to get other organisations to come in to have a look at the space, so they can use it when all the work's finished off. There was a group of us and we planned to have an afternoon tea to show them the new space and let them know about the local area. We found out information about the library in the archive in the new library, and we got out a box full of old invites for when the library was first opening. It was interesting to find out the history. We thought we could take photos of the originals and display them. We wrote some letters and got in touch with shops to see if they would give us donations for the afternoon tea. That's on hold now and we'll have to see what happens with the virus. It was good to do. It was a chance to use old skills, putting them into practice again, showing me that I need to go back to work. It made me realise I can do more than I think I can. I'd forgotten a lot of stuff I can do. Now it's a case of pushing myself to do more. I know that Riverside does employability courses. I've done the Maths and English courses at Riverside. They've helped me through some difficult things. They've been very supportive.

They started up a Keep Paddling group. It was good for our mental health because we were stressed and bored and worried. It was an online group which was an extension of Riverside. We've done face masks, cooking, and card making. The person who runs it has been talking us through how to make things, and Riverside dropped something off every week so we had what we needed to make them. The children could help with card-making and it kept us all occupied.

Riverside wanted to make sure that women could have a space to be in touch with others for support in a difficult time of uncertainty, boredom and stress. They set up Keep Paddling sessions. They're a user-led online space where children can get involved too in activities like planting seeds. The women made masks for their extended families and for local people. Two hundred masks went out locally via Riverside. The group is making a digital time capsule from recordings of their Zoom sessions. There are plenty of skills within the group, though the women often haven't been recognising their own skills. They have taught each other things (Riverside).

Section 3. Mitigating disproportionate effects...

Riverside has worked to mitigate effects of years of austerity policy, described as disproportionately damaging 'the North's most vulnerable people'⁷⁵.

⁷⁵ Marcus Johns (2020), 10 Years of Austerity: Eroding resilience in the North, Institute for Public Policy Research. The report shows exacerbation of UK regional inequalities eg in 2018/2019 public spending on economic affairs (excluding transport) was concentrated on London and the south east, with investment for these regions rising from 29% to 37%, and the north's share falling from 29% to 25%. Between 2009/2010 and 2018/2019 council spending on services fell by 13% across England, and in the north by 20%.

The 2020 Marmot review of health inequalities highlights the negative impact of austerity in already disadvantaged areas, now disproportionately affected by the pandemic⁷⁶.

One of the Special Envoys to the World Health Organisation Director-General on COVID-19 has described it as 'turning into a disease of poor and disadvantaged people'⁷⁷. There is emerging evidence that women will be significantly negatively affected by loss of employment because of the pandemic. A briefing paper produced by Nottingham and Warwick universities outlines ways in which working class women are 'carrying the burden of the COVID-19 pandemic'⁷⁸.

The UK exit from the European Union risks exacerbating regional inequalities⁷⁹, and putting people on low incomes at greater financial disadvantage⁸⁰, particularly women⁸¹. The government has not yet announced how EU structural funds⁸² will be replaced⁸³. A recent research report⁸⁴ suggests that the referendum result has already negatively affected living standards, and that what is needed is certainty about the UK's future links with the EU. This point has not yet been reached.

Riverside's organisational experience, competence, and mix of steadiness and flexibility are invaluable in the current situation of accelerated change⁸⁵ because of the pandemic, with the risk of higher levels of isolation, poverty, and potential destitution⁸⁶. In March 2020 the team responded promptly to a global crisis, and continued to meet the challenges of developing accessible training and volunteering pathways for local people.

⁷⁶ Clare Bambra, Ryan Riordan, John Ford, Fiona Matthews, 2020, The COVID-19 pandemic and health inequalities, *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, epub ahead of print.

⁷⁷ Dr David Nabarro speaking on the BBC PM news and current affairs programme, 13 October 2020.

⁷⁸ Tracey Warren and Clare Lyonette, 2020, Carrying the work burden of the COVID-19 pandemic: working class women in the UK, University of Nottingham, Institute for Employment Research at Warwick University.

⁷⁹ Kate Henry and Marley Morris, 2019, Regional Funding after Brexit: Opportunities for the UK's shared prosperity fund, Institute for Public Policy Research.

⁸⁰ Angus Armstrong, Katerina Lisenkova and Simon P Lloyd (2016), The EU Referendum and Fiscal Impact on Low Income Households, National Institute of Economic and Social Research; National Institute of Economic and Social Research, 2016, Brexit and low income families.

⁸¹ Women's Budget Group, Fawcett Society and FaceHerFuture, 2018, Exploring the Economic Impact of Brexit on Women, p.7. Women make up most of the workforce in areas such as health (77%) and social care (80).

⁸² EU Structural Funds support economic development and reduce inequality between regions across Europe. The 2017 Conservative manifesto included a pledge to set up a UK Shared Prosperity Fund to replace Structural Funds. The 2019 Conservative manifesto promised that £500 million of the Shared Prosperity Fund would be used to give disadvantaged people the skills they need to succeed in life. Few details about the operation of the Shared Prosperity Fund have been released. In the March 2020 budget the government committed to setting out further plans at the next spending review.

⁸³ NCVO website, 4 Sept 2019, Spending Round 2019: An end to austerity or a pause?

⁸⁴ James Smith, 2019, Counting the cost: UK living standards since the 2016 referendum, Resolution Foundation Briefing.

⁸⁵ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, 2018, A connected society: A strategy for tackling loneliness.

⁸⁶ Dame Louise Casey, 2020, BBC Today news and current affairs programme, 15 October.

Finding a way: Surviving and thriving

Riverside has effectively managed a sudden leap forward and, as risk and uncertainty continue, will carry on:

- offering online service provision
- supporting everyone in the team during a period of additional pressure and potential stress, with regular online staff meetings
- working alongside Newcastle Family Hub and Action for Children to make sure the most vulnerable families continue to receive support
- providing emergency supplies to people in greatest need
- supporting people to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme, having successfully applied for funding for partnership work with Newcastle Law Centre and the Children's Society, as the lead partner
- developing the website to highlight wider strategic work behind its service provision
- involving local people in the development of its Facebook page
- planning an online introductory community development session for new members of the Riverside team, open to partner organisations
- managing building refurbishment for long-term sustainability
- challenging racism and other forms of discrimination in the context of increasing rates of UK hate crime reporting⁸⁷. The team has done a lot of work with local people to share information about what hate crime is, how to report it, and why reporting is important
- contributing to place based change⁸⁸ through partnership, e.g. the multi-agency Social Justice Advisory Group facilitated by Newcastle University. Riverside is an invaluable partner in collaborative discussion about ways of avoiding a widening of inequalities
- further developing training and volunteering pathways, working with local people towards best possible outcomes.

The report ends with the following quote highlighting Riverside's capacity and resilience in unrelentingly difficult times. The Riverside team is experienced and skilled in encouraging and supporting people in keeping going and finding a way.

They are in it for the long haul because circumstances are not going to get better in the short term (Partner organisation).

⁸⁷ Home Office, 2020, Hate Crime, England and Wales 2019/20.

⁸⁸ Public Health England, 2019, Guidance: Place-based approaches for reducing health inequalities. The guidance identifies action to reduce health inequalities as being an investment for England's national and local economies. Place-based approaches recognise the need to address wider determinants of health.

Appendix 1:

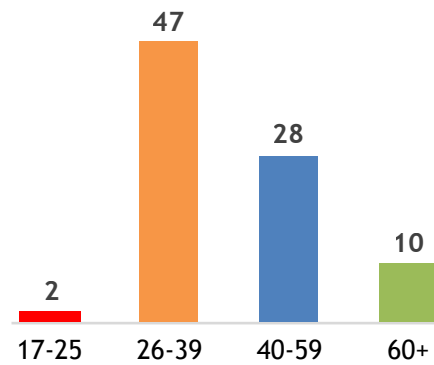
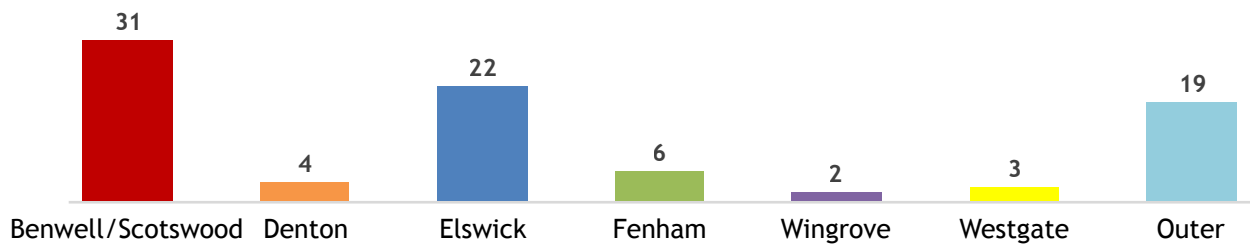
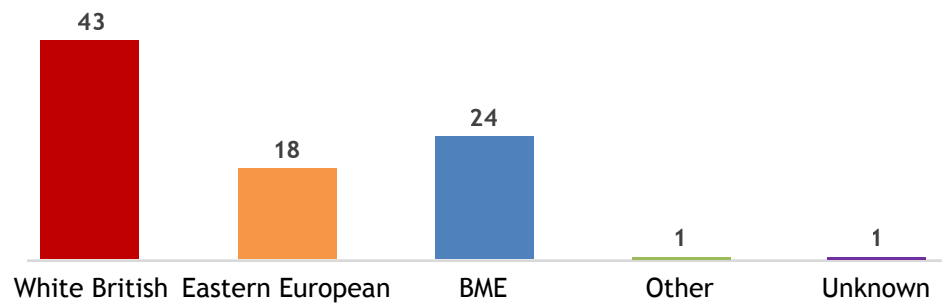
Volunteers

87 Active volunteers

131 Registered volunteers

Female: 78

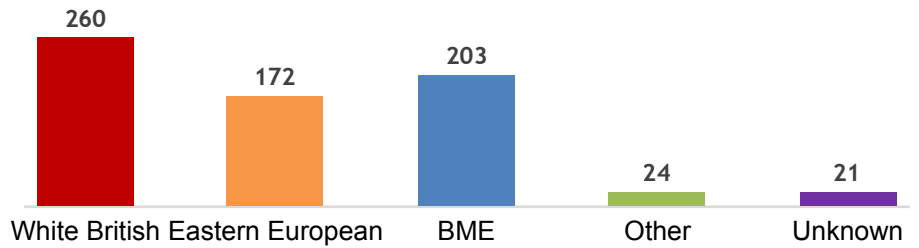
Male: 9



Hours Given	Monetary Value	Full time staff equivalent	Into Employment
12,806	£190,041.04 (14.84ph)	8	20

Training

680 individuals attended training courses, and **90** attended more than one

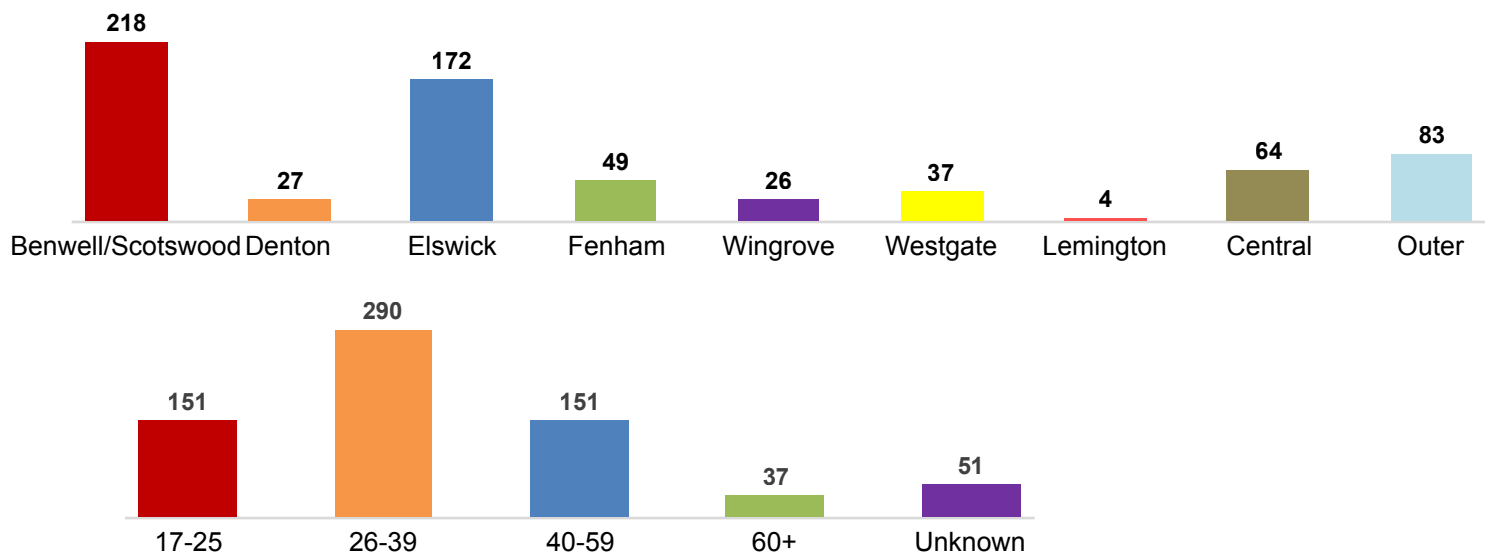


Accredited: **589**

Non-accredited: **91**

Female: **548**

Male: **132**



Courses Provided

Early Years Education

ESOL

Functional Skills English

Distance Learning

Food Hygiene Level 2

Health and Safety at Work

Manual Handling

Teaching Assistant Level 2

Basic First Aid

SIA Badge

Functional Skills Maths

Beauty Therapy

Safeguarding Adults and Children

Equality and Diversity

Paediatric First Aid

Effective Communication

Data Protection & Confidentiality

Community Interpreting Level 1

Appendix 2: Riverside ASDAN programme for adults

The adult (over 16) foundation training programme equips people for a volunteer/work environment. Each person taking part in the ASDAN pathway shapes a learning package to meet their own identified needs. The certificate can be achieved through completion of thirty hours of structured training and ten hours volunteering. It is the equivalent of a general certificate in secondary education at advanced level, and contributes points towards an employability qualification. There is the possibility of access to Newcastle College short courses, with a guaranteed job interview.

Each potential applicant has an informal interview in which they outline their motivation, what they hope to achieve, and specific activities they would like to be involved with. The training and volunteer team planned this in so that they could get to know each person and check that the pathway is right for them. The interview produces baseline information with each applicant, recording personal development goals as well as skill and experience targets, for evaluation purposes. Each applicant completes a DBS check.

Each participant completes mandatory sessions that cover:

- Team building
- Effective communication
- Manual handling
- Health and safety at work
- Safeguarding adults and children
- Equality and diversity
- Food hygiene
- Data protection and confidentiality
- First aid.

Following mandatory training there is a choice of specialist sessions, including:

- Administration and office support
- Child development
- Community events
- Catering
- Social isolation in the community.

The team has developed a process of regularly reviewing progress with each person, and making any changes needed to ensure goals are achieved. The Training and Volunteer team mentor participants and offer appropriate support to complete the ASDAN short course booklet in which they document what they do in each training session. Mid-course, each participant has a one to one meeting with the Coordinator. Additional support sessions are bookable at any time. One to ones are an opportunity to raise concerns and consider volunteer placement opportunities. Each participant keeps a journal with reflections on their learning during training and on volunteer placement.

The ASDAN programme expands people's volunteering opportunities, with Riverside as a broker of placements in a range of organisations.

At the end of each ASDAN training course participants have the opportunity to design and manage their own volunteer activity.